



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2014  
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET  
2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:11 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Sam Davis arrived at 2:15 p.m. The Honorable Leona K. Plough was absent. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager provided an update on the nationwide search that began on November 12, 2013 to recruit and select the next police chief. She reported that the position closed on December 11, 2013 and twenty eight (28) applicants met the minimum requirements. She further reported that the search committee met on December 16, 2013 to conduct a preliminary assessment of qualified applicants and the pool of candidates was narrowed down. She noted that the search committee will meet again on January 10, 2014 to move toward the next step in the selection process. She stated that the process is on track and the new police chief should begin employment in March 2014. [Click here to view the City Manager's Update on the Police Chief Search](#)

Councilor Devine asked if Ms. Wilson contacted the community stakeholders that were recommended by City Council members.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said she is still waiting on names and will begin contacting the stakeholders next week.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Jeff Palen, Chief Financial Officer presented the financial report through November 2013 for the General Fund, Water and Sewer Fund and the Parking Fund. He noted that the format has been changed to reflect comparisons of current actual expenditures versus prior year expenditures and the current actual expenditures versus the budget. He explained that there are seasonal activities that can affect expenses. He reported that the year-end audit is at partner review; upon completion, copies will be provided to Council; and the auditor will be scheduled to review the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) with City Council in February. [Click here to view the Financial Report](#)

## **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION**

### 1. Governmental Affairs Update – Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager

#### a) [Federal Legislative Priorities](#) – Mr. Ralph Garboushian, Capital Edge, LLC

Mr. Ralph Garboushian, Capital Edge, LLC stated that the first session of Congress was reported as being the most unproductive session in history, but it has been a busy year for the city at the federal level. He reported that funding for local core government programs are in sequestration and we've seen big cuts to a lot of programs. He said the other issues for the past year include: sales tax fairness; preservation of the tax exemption for municipal bonds; prevention of unfunded mandates; and preemption of local authority. He said Congress will start looking at the reauthorization of highway and transit legislation; the current bill was a two year bill. The chairmen from the House and Senate Budget Committees reached the Murray-Ryan Budget Agreement to punt most budget and tax issues beyond the election, but they undid sequestration to a certain extent and gave the Appropriations Committees more room to work with by setting top spending lines for fiscal year 2014 and 2015. He said this puts the city in a position to see level funding or small increases for those core programs such as CDBG, HOME and law enforcement and public safety assistance. He noted that the sequestration also hit defense spending and as the home to Fort Jackson, Columbia was hit on that end as well. He reported that the Senate passed the sales tax fairness legislation with sixty-nine votes and Congress will eventually act on that issue. As it relates to protecting the tax exemption municipal bonds, he suggested that local governments and their allies continue to beat that drum; the threat to that tax exemption is very real. He said they haven't seen much with the prevention of unfunded mandates, but there is always talk about preempting hotel occupancy taxes and other local taxes. Looking ahead, he said that the biggest issue is increasing the share of funding that comes straight to metropolitan areas. He said these are the issues he wants the city to lobby on. – [Click here to view the Fiscal Year 2014 Funding Chart](#)

#### b) [State Legislative Priorities](#) – Mr. Kyle Michel, Michel Law Firm, LLC and Ms. Ray Gray, Special Projects/Governmental Affairs & Community Relations

Mr. Kyle Michel, Michel Law Firm, LLC presented the following bills that were enacted in 2013 that also impact the city: the Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act, the State Highway Secondary System, the Development of Real Property, Dog Attack Liability and Patrol Canine, and the Local Government Fund. He presented the following issues for 2014: Certified Law Enforcement Officers at the Columbia Fire Department to allow for dual office holding; Business License Tax: one bill is to eliminate the business license tax for cities and only allow counties to charge business license taxes and then remit any portion to the city and the other is to prohibit cities from collecting business license tax on gross income derived from interstate or international sales of manufacturing businesses; Dilapidated Buildings would give the city cause of action against a property owner who is not in compliance with city ordinances and allow the city to demolish or rehabilitate the property; the Dogs and Domestic Pets Bills would limit the services the

city's animal shelter could provide; Transportation Funding will be a priority for 2014, including gas tax discussions; the Ethics legislation is pending in the legislature; but there is the potential requirement for local lobbyists to register with the State Ethics Commission; Flow Control legislation is a huge issue for counties, but would be modified to impact the city's garbage operations; and the Mayor's Panel on Violent Crime and Bond Reform has companion bills that give the Circuit Court the authority to revoke a defendant's bond under certain circumstances. He asked Council to pass a resolution in support of the Municipal Association's priorities to include the Dilapidated Buildings Act, fully funding the Local Government Fund; long-term stable infrastructure funding; and supporting legislation that enhances public safety and judicial efforts to prevent violent crime, including gang activity. He announced the upcoming Hometown Legislative Action Day on February 5, 2014. He sought endorsement of the city's 2014 state legislative priorities and input from Council on how they would like to interact with the Legislative Delegation.

Ms. Ray Gray, Special Projects Administrator for Governmental Affairs & Community Relations announced that the Legislative Reception is scheduled for February 26, 2014 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the 701 Center for Contemporary Art.

Mr. Sam Johnson, Special Assistant to the Mayor noted that Mayor Benjamin will be joining other Mayors at a NLC Conference for advocacy on youth issues in New Orleans on February 26, 2014.

Councilor Devine suggested that the date of the reception be changed since Mayor Benjamin has a scheduling conflict.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to endorse the following state legislative priorities for 2014. Mr. Baddourah was not present for the vote.

- Oppose legislation that limit's the City's administration of its business license tax.
- Support full funding of the Local Government Fund.
- Support S. 19 and other legislation that implements recommendations of the Mayor's Panel on Violent Crime and Bond Reform.
- Support legislation that allows the Columbia Fire Department to have fire marshal certified law enforcement officers.
- Oppose legislation on dogs and domestic pets, as currently written.
- Support dilapidated buildings legislation.
- Monitor Transportation, Ethics and Flow Control legislation for possible impacts to the City.

- c) [2013 Year-End Annexation Report](#) – Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services

Mr. Stephen Zigmund, Planner I for the Planning and Development Services Department provided an update on annexations in the City of Columbia. He reported that in 2013, we had 22 annexations that included 29 individual parcels representing 147 new acres into the city. He noted that these 147 acres represent an additional \$38 million in taxable property, which translates into \$104,000 for the city. He said the annexations occurred in the north, northeast and south regions of the city. He noted that a few donut holes were brought into the city as well. He reported that in 2014, they will continue to target the Farrow Road corridor; our commercial tax base in the northeast off of the Clemson Road corridor; and a large donut hole in the Rosewood/Beltline Boulevard area using the 75% petition method. He reported that the city annexes 2,000 acres a year and our boundaries have changed based on the 8,000 annexations made since 2009.

Councilor Davis added that some subdivisions are donut holes. He asked if those properties have been identified and if so, he would like to see the list.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services noted that they need strong support from City Council in order to use the 75% petition method, especially in areas with a large absentee landlord population; you have to weigh your options when using the 75% method.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said this was up for discussion in the Legislature and she asked Ms. Hampton to provide Kyle Michel with the history on what we've tried; what would make it easier for us in attempting to use the 75% petition method; and to identify what other methods in state law trigger a city to be able to go after large areas.

Councilor Devine asked staff to follow up with the school district on the annexation of Keenan High School. She said she received phone calls from several homeowners in Hasting Points that may be interested in being annexed into the city. She suggested that staff also look at that area as new houses are being developed.

Councilor Davis said he understands the need to take this approach, but we need fulltime efforts on annexations as opposed to shared responsibilities.

Councilor Newman asked that the lists be generated by District and that they be given advance notice of the annexations.

Mayor Benjamin concurred with Mr. Davis, noting that they will have to set priorities. He said that we need to balance our interests when considering the annexation of Keenan High School; it does not become a tax base, but it might benefit the school.

Mr. John Fellows, Planning Administrator for the Planning and Development Services Department showed Council the urban service area that was for the City of Columbia adopted in 2009. He noted that they will be looking at the land use plan component and the development code in the next year. He proposed that they work with the Administrative Policy Committee to review the annexation policy.

Councilor Runyan asked how we calculate the net revenues being brought back to the city.

Mr. Stephen Zigmund, Planner I for the Planning and Development Services Department explained that he looks at the total property value with our millage; that information is sent to every department for comments and cost estimates for service that are then compiled and used to complete a cost-benefit analysis. He noted that this procedure is done for the annexation of primary and secondary areas, but not donut holes.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services said sometimes it's a quality of life issue.

Mayor Benjamin asked to see the formula used to determine what's primary and secondary and where the focus for primary and secondary annexations might be.

Councilor Devine warned against allowing development to block us from being contiguous and suggested that we be strategic as to whether or not it makes sense to bring in some of these areas now, because it may get us closer to other commercial areas later.

Mayor Benjamin asked the Finance Audit and Budget Committee along with the City Manager to focus on fulltime efforts for annexations.

d) Legislative Tracking – Ms. Whanna Bouknight, Administrator/ Governmental Affairs and Community Relations

Ms. Whanna Bouknight, Administrator for Governmental Affairs and Community Relations and Ms. Mary Green of Green Grassroots demonstrated the legislative tracking system, which allows the city to track bills of interest; allows bills to be assigned to departments and divisions for comments; it allows all comments to be stored centrally; and the system also includes a database of officials. They noted that this is an internal tracking system for the City of Columbia.

e) Constituency Tracking – Ms. Connie Lucius, Ombudsman/Office of the City Council

Ms. Connie Lucius, Ombudsman/Office of the City Council and Ms. Mary Green of Green Grassroots presented the constituency tracking system, which allows the city to track concerns that are reported to City Council members and the City Manager until the matter is closed out. They noted that PDFs, photos and other documents can be added to the system along with the reported concern and reports can be queried using a particular address, a specific neighborhood or a specific issue.

Councilor Baddourah requested a report of calls made to the Customer Care Center (252-2911) for his district. He said the biggest concern seems to be break-ins, but he doesn't hear about the incidents until later.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said this system is being used to document concerns and ensuring that matters are being resolved outside of the Customer Care Center. She said this is her way of helping Council keep track of the concerns they receive directly.

2. Homeless Services – Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager
  - a) Implementation of the Columbia Cares Motion
  - b) Draft Request for Proposals
  - c) Mr. Runyan's Response to the Draft Request for Proposals
  - d) Draft Request for Information

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that staff made a good attempt at addressing the Homeless Response Motion passed by City Council. She noted that the last update was provided on November 19, 2013. She recalled that one directive was to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) based off of that motion and the six (6) goals that Council identified. She asked what main role Council wants to play in addressing homeless services. She hopes the RFI will become a RFP that produces a responsive, robust set of proposals from external sources. As the City Manager, she wants to go down this path knowing that we can ultimately implement whatever would come back to us, but in a responsible manner knowing that resources are limited. She agreed to work with Mr. Runyan as the chair of the Finance Audit and Budget Committee going forward. She said we are not a social service agency, but we should be able to partner with the right human and social service agencies and other partners to get this done.

Councilor Runyan acknowledged that this is such a complicated issue. He explained that the concept of a Request for Information (RFI) is in essence an RFP for solutions and the thought process was to raise the bar by soliciting ideas to help us reach our goals; ultimately that will turn into policy and a direction for the city. He said the RFP as originally crafted missed the opportunity to harness all of the feedback and ideas of the service providers; we want to solicit the best ideas that are out there and bring those together to develop a true policy directive that will change the dialog and approach around this issue for the generations to come. He said his email requested that staff refocus on how we solicit ideas. He commended staff for doing a great job of bringing that back as a RFI and he would like to move forward with releasing the RFI for 30-days, bring the ideas back and use that to craft a deep RFP that would go out before the shelter closes. He said we have a lot of work to do; we need to bring everyone to the table; and let everyone have ownership.

Councilor Newman asked for the projected timeline for creating the RFP and the next steps.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager referenced the tentative timeline that begins with releasing the RFI this week; going through a pre-solicitation and pre-submittal question and answer period with a final date to submit responses to the RFI by February 7, 2014; tentatively releasing the RFP on March 3, 2014 with submittals being due on April 4, 2014; and completing the RFP process on March 15, 2014.

Councilor Devine questioned the intent of the RFI and the RFP. She asked what the process will be going forward.

Councilor Runyan said Council set the target, which was the six (6) goals and they have to tap into the aptitude within folks who provide services at various levels to determine how we go about achieving these goals. He said the city has sanctioned the goals and now we are sanctioning the Request for Ideas on how we get to the goal. He anticipated that we'll receive various proposals from agencies looking to take ownership of a piece of it. He said we've had very little cooperation from many providers in the community throughout the course of this process.

Councilor Devine disagreed that we've had very little cooperation, because a lot of providers have called and wanted to be a part of the solution. She asked how responses to the RFI will be compared and how will we turn that into a RFP. She said we let staff move forward with putting together a RFP that people were ready to respond to and now we are changing that. She said we need to be clear on our expectations. As an example, she asked how a response from a social service provider taking ownership of the mental health piece or someone's response dealing with homeless youth would be turned into a RFP. She asked Mr. Runyan what is his vision for connecting what we get in a RFI to a RFP. She sought clarification on the difference between the RFI and the public hearings that Mr. Runyan presided over. She sought to understand the process.

Councilor Runyan said there is a vast difference between the input sessions that were essentially open mic forums for hopes, aspirations and concerns about homelessness in the city and the RFI was largely drawn out of the research we've done identifying where the challenges are. He said we understand the population and what's going on in this city; we have enormous gaps with mental health; we have sex offenders without programs to go into; we have transportation needs; and these fifteen (15) challenges that we need to solve are in the RFI. As an example, he said Transitions does a really good job with transitional housing for those that can become self-sufficient again, but they don't have the capability to deal with those that are severely mentally ill; they won't be able to take ownership of that piece of it, but they can bring excellence to the transitional housing component.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if the city's role will be to draft an RFP that asks people to partner in a certain way. She said if that is the case the city would essentially be facilitating this.

Councilor Runyan said we don't have the financial capacity to continue in our role as a primary service provider for the homeless indefinitely, but we can take the leadership role. He said there is an important role for law enforcement and everyone to play. He said there is a leadership role for the city to play, but not as the primary funder. He said after we receive the responses to the RFI there will be gaps remaining and those gaps will be filled by issuing the RFP.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if this will be based on the \$500,000 budget.

Councilor Runyan said they will have to work through that, because his goal is to get the city out of the money we are spending on homeless services; not to expand it.

Mayor Benjamin said they agreed to have a period that would ask people for ideas and using those ideas to compose a RFP.

Councilor Devine suggested that they get the ideas, discuss those ideas and then develop a RFP. She said they agreed to pull together people with expertise to gather ideas. She said we can't give people expectations at this time. She insisted that the RFI and RFP should not be tied together at this time.

Mayor Benjamin said if we are going to play a leadership role we would have to go through a competitive process. He said it is prudent to commit to a timeline and if we determine that more time is needed, we'll push back recognizing that we have long-term issues to deal with.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said this Council has done a great job with having the shelter open 24/7 and she doesn't want the deadline for closing the shelter to be the impetus of this. She said we will protect the city and the citizens. She said the emergency shelter is running well. She asked Council to give staff flexibility to make decisions in operating the shelter aside from this decision.

Councilor Davis said there are organizations that need to combine resources and fill the gap in services and funding. He said we need to be upfront about what funding we have and what we will spend those funds on.

Councilor Baddourah asked if forums will be held to receive input on the RFI.

Mayor Benjamin said it is a good idea to have interactive opportunities for citizens to provide input between the question and answer period.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Runyan and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to proceed with the City Manager's tentative timeline and to issue the Request for Information as written.



## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Newman and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 4:19 p.m.

3. Discussion of matters relating to proposed location or expansion of services to encourage location or expansion of industries or other businesses – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
4. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
5. Discussion of appointment and employment of an employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
6. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk